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THEIR WAYWARD ROUND

Works of Dean Swift

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THEIR WAYWARD ROUND

A Poem

BY

SOPHIA LYDIA WALTERS

AUTHOR OF "LOSTARA"

"*Where rivulets dance their wayward round.*"

WORDSWORTH

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To

ELEANOR FARJEON

AUTHOR OF THE VOLUME OF POETRY
ENTITLED "PAN-WORSHIP"

Accept, dear Nellie, the dedication of my latest little book as a token of friendship, and thereby gild with your bright sympathy my ephemeral verses in remembrance of many happy, sunny days at Overstrand.

Sophie L. Walters.

1910.

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE MOUNTAIN (JOY) 14

THE VALLEY (PEACE) 43

THE GLEN (REST) 88

Their Wayward Round

Mortal, come listen to a merry brook,
Ere wintry weather, when the frost is long,
Forbids my wandering, restrains my song,
And stays my bubbling in some forest nook.

Come, hear the change of key at every crook,
Ere branches bar the way, a chilly throng,
Sighing unseen the frosty glooms among,
Where nevermore their leafy children look.

O come and hearken me; for I will tell,
This autumn morning, how the pebbles shine
With rainbow-like reflections sweet, that fell
From vanished blooms, and how these hues divine
Rise ghostlike and their liquid grave repel,
Who with this song would hush them when they pine.

Rondel.

Ye shall be free—my lucent wave
Will rise in summer-time to lave
The arid air and sultry sky;
Then will ye gain your liberty,
Whilst I float in the vaulted cave.

We shall dispart; and ye shall have
The fullest freedom that ye crave—
To sing, to soar, to leap, to fly
Ye shall be free.

It was for this the mountain gave
Me many a song wherewith to save
Ye from regretful memory;
For we shall meet no more to sigh,
And death is summer to the brave—
Ye shall be free.

Villanelle.

Follow me, then;
There is joy on the mountain, peace in the vale,
Rest in the glen.

Mist from the fen
Told this to the mountain in vapour so pale;
Follow me, then;

Their Wayward Round

And thou shalt ken
I heard from the mountain of peace in the vale,
Rest in the glen.

Women and men,
I sing ye of three things, my song shall not fail;
Follow me, then.

Joy first; and when
All that is sung, there is peace—afterwards hail
Rest in the glen.

Pray with me, wren,
That joy from the mountain may hitherward sail.
Follow me, then;
Rest in the glen.

O Love of good, that maketh glad,
O Patience, that perfecteth all,
Let your delight upon me fall,
So that my songs may ne'er be sad.

Abide with me, that I may add
A joyance to the child of thrall;
O Love of good, that maketh glad,
O Patience, that perfecteth all.

Their Wayward Round

For blest were they who blithely had
The light of pleasure's coronal;
Then make my singing musical,
And let these shades in joy be clad,
O Love of good, that maketh glad,
O Patience, that perfecteth all.

The Wild Anemone

Take me to thy woodland home,
  Divinest flower that earth has known.
Broken rainbows fall in foam,
  Thou hast the colour for thine own.

Take me to thy silver tent;
  Expand thyself and o'er me bend
While I dwindle.—Wonderment!
  My soul is now thy fairy friend.

Cheer me with thy song devout;
  Be uttering thy thought aloud.
Holy airs, around, about,
  Shall wander from the wandering cloud.

Their Wayward Round

Early morning, asking, Where
  O flower, is she whose voice I hear?
Shall not see me furtive there;
  To thee alone will I appear.

Clinging, bee-like, to thy bloom,
  I will a fairy state assume;
All for me the dainty room.
  Thou wilt my little life illume.

Tiny, viewless life of mine:
  All viewless to the life of Time;
Kindred with that scent of thine
  The seraphs know and deem sublime.

So we live, and we are blest,
  We ever dwell in happiness:
In the woodland deep we rest,
  While Magians guard our dim recess.

Live, O flower; and still survive
  Though worlds are whelmed in Nature's strife;
Song, the honey; thou, the hive;
  And love to beautify our life.

THE MOUNTAIN

JOY

Ballade.

FORTH from the mountain I come leaping,
  Leaping down the rocky way;
Morn, o'er the hill-tops softly creeping,
  Lights me with a joyous ray;
  Yet, to greet it can I stay?
  Voices from the craggy height
  Call me back; I answer, "Nay,
  Sweet are morn, and life, and light."

Autumn light on the mount is sleeping,
  Light more fair than light of May;
Part of a bright immortal weeping
  Sing I blithe in roundelay.
  Youth is sweet, is glad, is gay;
  O'er the boulders moss-bedight
  I go shouting on for aye,
  Sweet are morn, and life, and light.

The Mountain

Up in the pine the squirrels peeping
  Watch the dancing teardrops stray;
Wondering to whose holy keeping
  They go rolling all the day.
  Down the mountain stern and gray;
  Then I say, "I calm my flight
  In the glen; but now I play";
  Sweet are morn, and life, and light.

  Fresh and cold is my dashing spray,
    Fresh at morn, and noon, and night:
  Hark! the mountain echoes say,
    Sweet are morn, and life, and light.

Chant Royal.

'Tis morning on the mountain, fresh and cold;
'Tis morning, and the rolling mists dividing
Disclose the radiant galleys manifold
That proudly o'er the heavens' blue are riding;
With amber sails upfurled their course they keep,
And follow gladly o'er the sapphire deep;
While fairy mariners, in light arrayed,
Call from their sails in filmy ambuscade,
And loud the elfin steersmen make reply,
Shouting the glad tumultuous aubade—
Hail, morning! hail, thou bright and golden eye.

Their Wayward Round

The nimble sailors in their crafts of gold
Adown the ropes of gossamer go sliding,
Or, as the streaming gonfalons unfold,
Amid their ever changing forms are hiding:
The happy echoes fly from steep to steep,
And in and out the mountain caverns peep,
Or floating where the craggy heights are frayed
By time oft sharpening his trusty blade,
They catch the joyous call as it goes by,
And fling it from the sunshine to the shade:
Hail, morning! hail, thou bright and golden eye.

Up, up, on wing exultant, strong and bold,
The eager lark his tardy speed is chiding;
He seeks the high dominion uncontrolled,
Where thou, O globe of glory, art residing;
Up to the silver isles, the billowy heap,
He springs the stair of sound with buoyant leap:
The modest daisy, half-awakened maid,
Beholds him in amazement, half afraid,
What song is this? she wonders drowsily,
Whereat to her a laughing mock has strayed:
Hail, morning! hail, thou bright and golden eye.

The Mountain

Hail, star! who seest from thy throne of old
The countless springs that o'er the earth are gliding,
Who dost amid those shining paths behold
The stream of Art for evermore abiding;
Beside whose wave processions ever sweep,
Flinging therein brave garlands that do creep
Along the gulf; sweet fruits from many a glade
Mood-tinted and with sparkling jewels sprayed;
They fling them on the tide delightedly
And see the floating wreaths this emblem braid:
Hail, morning! hail, thou bright and golden eye.

Meanwhile the stones, the heavy clay, the mould
Sink downward and are lost amid deriding;
But floating on, like tapestry unrolled,
Are many rafts that shapes of light are guiding
To that far sea where earnest spirits reap
The merit of their toil; where those who weep
Shall sing for joy, and then full softly wade
From the celestial shore to where is stayed
The gift made new; then lifting voices high
In happiness, anon the praise is paid:
Hail, morning! hail, thou bright and golden eye.

L'Envoi.

And surely as the dew thy beam obeyed,
Those amaranthine joys shall never fade;
But sing in gladness, through a fairer sky:
Hail, day! so often sought, so long delayed,
Hail, morning! hail, thou bright and golden eye.

Triolets.

Hark, I hear the voices three
That sing in unison;
There flies the echo, poesy,—
Hark, I hear the voices three,
Reason, Action, Harmony;
Fly, echo, aye, fly on—
Hark, I hear the voices three
That sing in unison.

First Voice

I alone would nurture thee
In nightingales' deep tone;
Echo, thou must wiser be,
I alone would nurture thee—
I am Reason—hearken me;
O whither art thou gone?
I alone would nurture thee,
In nightingales' deep tone.

Second Voice

Wake thee, echo, wake to me;
Thy magic mantle don;
I am dulcet Harmony.
Wake thee, echo, wake to me;
As a lark I follow thee
With shrillest orison.
Wake thee, echo, wake to me,
Thy magic mantle don.

Third Voice

Away, away, to seek the prize
I hasten here and there.
A swift of wild activities;
Away, away, to seek the prize.
Open, sleeper, ope thine eyes.
Where hidest thou? ah where?
Away, away, to seek the prize
I hasten here and there.

Their Wayward Round

Trio

All in vain our single cries
Pervade the empty air
And the heedless azure skies.
All in vain our single cries
They but scare the butterflies
And raise the ghost Despair;
All in vain our single cries
Pervade the empty air.

Yet behold! the spirit flies,
The blithe, the debonair;
How the silver wings uprise,
Chiming to our harmonies
That weave a subtle snare;
Yet behold! the spirit flies,
The blithe, the debonair.

The Mountain

First Voice

Did my voice then loudest ring
O'er the waving heather,
Hidden soul embodying?
Did my voice then loudest ring,
Bidding echo slumbering
Airy plumes upgather?
Did my voice then loudest ring
O'er the waving heather?

Duo

Like sun-gathered breath of spring,
Leaving torrid weather;
At thy compassed caroling,
Like sun-gathered breath of spring
Fades the dainty balancing,
Fades the flitting feather;
Like sun-gathered breath of spring,
Leaving torrid weather.

Their Wayward Round

Trio

Echo liveth when we sing,
When we sing together;
See, on bright undying wing
Echo liveth when we sing,
And from star to star doth fling
Truth's immortal tether;
Echo liveth when we sing,
When we sing together.

I thank ye, spirits, one, two, three,
I pray ye ever sing to me:
  Ever sing as I run by,
  Ever make the echo fly,
  Ever raise sweet poesy.

And as adown the hillside free
I haste in joy, I haste in glee,
  Sing ye low, and sing ye high,
  Raise the joyous harmony.
  Ever sing as I run by.

The Mountain

And if athwart the distant lea
The surly thundercloud ye see,
  Blow him from the azure sky
  With the might of melody;
  Ever make the echo fly.

And when the day dawns over ye,
And starry boats sink in the sea,
  Sing, for then the morn is nigh.
  Hail the day triumphantly,
  Ever raise sweet poesy.
  Ever raise sweet poesy,
  Ever make the echo fly,
  Ever sing as I run by;
  I pray ye all, sing merrily.

  And I will join you in your song
  As I sweep along,
Rushing 'mid the boulders or else eddying demure,
  Watching wrinkled mosses,
  Creased and velvet bosses,
Drinking, drinking from the wave so crystalline and pure.

Their Wayward Round

See, beneath the sun,
How my wavelets run
In yellow light, in silver light, in light so newly born;
See how it doth flicker
Where the shadows bicker;
Up goes the sun, up goes the lark, O bright, O glorious morn.

Ring, thou heather bell,
Gossamers to tell
How the flying echo they must never try to stop;
How they must not bind him
If that they should find him.
How—ah! see him flying round the mountain top.

Shadows of the pearl
O'er his pennons curl,
Shadows of the flying clouds that lightly sweep above;
Hither, thither gliding,
Sweetest bird abiding,
Noble as the eagle and as gentle as the dove.

The Mountain

In and out the mist,
Trailing where it list,
Like a fairy swallow on a foamy moonlight sea,
Goes the plumèd spirit,
Bird that shall inherit
Airy nests of happiness amid eternity.

Hark! (it sings aloud)
Time, that cage of cloud,
Holdeth man a little while as yonder cloud the lark;
Shine, O Sun of Day,
Draw the clouds away.
Let the singer shine alone, a bright, a starry spark.
As that bird of earth
Catches at the birth
All the fitful melodies that flutter from my soul,
So I catch in duty
All the hues of beauty
That around the mountain peak in silent billows roll.

Barred with purple bloom
Is this living tomb,
And therein are many things to pleasure and delight;
Else some might be fretting
At the long forgetting
Of the unborn happiness that may not enter night.

Their Wayward Round

Beauty, thou art given
Like a word from heaven,
Fallen from the lightning of an angel's utterance;
Far away to shiver
From thy golden quiver,
Sent to give the distant world a means of sustenance.

Telling, earthly speech
Changes; and to each
Kingdom its own dialect—why smile, O Sphinx of Fame?
Will not earth surrender
All the words they lend her,
When they call the passive regions after their own name?

Earth smiles in reply,
And, like tears that dry
On a happy visage, or like sun-belovèd rains,
Idle appellations
Vanish with the nations;
Only Beauty's faithful tongue eternally remains.

In her palace bright
Lovely shapes of light
Look from out the windows of the many-storied fane:
Look a moment only;
Then the pane is lonely
While the gazers long and wait until she come again.

The Mountain

Sometimes do they lean
Forward, and half seen,
One will sing a melody as clear as any bird;
Some with silent graces
Show angelic faces;
Others speak a deathless spell in some enchanted word.

And to tell of these
Sweet appearances,
And describe the flowers that they scatter to the ground,
Is the great endeavour
Going on for ever,
Where the love of truth and joy in human soul is found.

Whatsoever rare
Mortals garner there,
Whether shape, or melody, or word of sweet intent,
These are taken straightway
Through the palace gateway,
There to deck the mighty hall with costly ornament.

Many toilers call
This the Christian hall,
Though, like foreign workmen among native labourers,
Some may never know
That 'tis callèd so;
And to frame the novel sounds full many a lip demurs.

Their Wayward Round

Oft do they condemn
Things surrounding them,
Hating uncouth gutturals they cannot understand.
They may hate the power
Of the outer tower,
Yet they work to send its praises ringing through the land.

'Tis the subtle love
Of those shapes above
Cherishes their labour all with amaranths entwined ;
While they work and ponder
In an idle wonder,
Loving with the heart and soul, if never with the mind.

There with silent tongue
Toil they 'mid the throng,
Writing a clear Ephphatha for millions yet to come;
Who shall read the lore,
Learning to adore,
From gazing on the sightless eye and hearkening the dumb.

Go then, magic lute,
To a land deaf-mute,
Strike thy single note of bliss and set the captive free ;
Beauty be the guide
To the nations wide ;
Be their pledge, their star, their hope, their immortality.

The Mountain

Fairy Song

With my fairy banquet spread :—
With the midnight sky o'erhead ;
And the fountain leaping high to the night ;
    I watch and wait expectantly
    The advent of a mystery,
    And cloudlets flit across the sky
        Soft and white.

Flash the spray !
Flash the spray !
    Leap higher, higher, fountain mine,
    Let the dancing spangles shine
        In moonlight.

What forms are coming through the glade ?
Advancing where the feast is laid ?
    It is a fairy vision,—but how bright !
They are the happy souls who rise,
And look on brooks with beaming eyes,
        A company divine.

Their Wayward Round

Flash the spray!
Flash the spray!
    Leap higher, higher, fountain mine,
    Let the dancing spangles shine
        In moonlight.

With my fairy banquet spread:—
With the midnight sky o'erhead:
And the fountain leaping high to the night.

Shine little glow-worm on the lawn,
  Thou fairy sentinel;
I walk adown the path o' night
  And feel thy magic spell.
The sweet young moon of summer shines
  Above the dewy night;
Thou hast a strange affinity
  With that mild crescent light.

To-day the hot sun burned with love
  Upon my garden flowers;
And the humming hawk-moth came,
  A-tremble in the bowers.
Its long, quick tongue it dipped within
  Each jasmine petal fine;
And fluttered, fluttered, everywhere
  To taste the varied wine.

The Mountain

'Tis gone—with daylight; sunset; sound.
  The birds are sleeping fast.
How still the farm-yard seems around!
  The cares of day are past.
The evening primrose opens wide
  Her yellow petals fair.
Oh wondrous flower, behold, thy true
  Bright sentinel is there.

Sestina.

  The light, the light
  So lovely and clear,
  Falls fair and sweet
  Upon my way,
And over the mountains' head,
  Within the sky
  Of polished blue,
  The world hath thrown
  White incense free,
Earth's prayer to heaven attaining.

  How slight, how slight
  And fragile appear
  The ferns that greet
  Where boulders gray
And terrible rocks are spread;
  So sharp and high,

Their Wayward Round

So wild to view,
Yet under the stone
O look and see
How little green leaves are feigning.

A flight, a flight
From memories drear
Of cold and sleet,
A long array
Of weariful dreams that fled
When Winter's sigh
In darkness flew
And Spring lay down
Upon her knee,
There growing as she was waning.

Thus night, bedight
With shadowy tear,
Doth slow retreat,
And leave the day
To live and vie with the dead.
In form to vie,
But oh, the hue
Which is its own
Should brighter be,
Each age in purity gaining.

The Mountain

'Tis right, 'tis right
The old should revere
Their children fleet,
Who live and play
Where clearer the light is shed;
Though years must die,
Eternal dew
Comes down and down
To glad the tree;
Rejoice in the silver raining.

I like to see the mount enwreathed in misty hood;
I like to hear the birdies sing when in a joyous mood;
I like to see the starlight twinkle through an aspen wood.

If I forget the fays, the mimic elves, the mimes,
When winter breathes, and through the air the freezing vapour climbs,
If icy ways and wintry days do rob me of my rhymes.

If winter stays my breath, if summer bids me fly,
Excess of heat, excess of cold, both singing lullaby,
O what a fragile, fluttering, and fickle thing am I.

Their Wayward Round

Though I may not descry my hidden sapphire nest,
My life is love, therefore am I of three delights possessed,
And goodwill, though a blind bird sings of joy and peace
and rest.

My varied way may hold full many eddyings, perchance,
That, like a diver's indrawn breath, the length of leap
enhance,
And retrogression of a part may bid the whole advance.

For if in acorn cups, when fairies lean to sup,
They fling a stone, it startles some, but helps to brim the
cup;
May all the weights the world has known but serve to raise
it up.

Now I will sing the song the fairies sang one night,
Tripping o'er the mountain when the summer moon was
bright,
Dancing o'er the heather in the pale ethereal light.

The Mountain

Fire spirits full of laughter
On the lonely moonlight heather
Meet the gnomes and fairy daughters
And the spirits of the waters.
We have broken every tether
Here to foot it altogether,
Foot it, foot it altogether
In the lovely summer weather.

Let each fairy,
Ne'er contrary,
Tell a favourite vagary—
Moonlight airy,
Hue canary,
This we love and are not chary ;
Be not wary,
Be not wary,
Tell your favourite vagary.

'Tis in taking,
'Tis in taking,
All the amber flames, and making
Dreams for breaking
And for shaking

Their Wayward Round

Fear from gems in darkness aching;
    'Tis forsaking
    Fires quaking,
For the jewels then are waking.

    Thunder, thunder,
    Give us thunder;
Crack the solid earth asunder;
    If we blunder
    'Tis no wonder,
For we live volcanoes under;

Fairy, beauty bubbles rise
Hither thither fluttering
On the light breeze wavering,
Born from some sublimer skies;
Lo! they dance without cessation,
And some hold a higher station
Than the other argosies.

Brooklet, if a minstrel tries
On a single theme to sing,
He knows beauty is a ring
Quick with electricities;
Without joint or separation;
Where light touch of inspiration
Circles into paradise.

The Mountain

Fairy, still 'tis my surmise
That the most consistent thing
For a poet's lyre to fling
Is what his own state supplies;
More appropriate in relation
Is some earthly supplication
Than affairs of dragon-flies.

Brooklet, truth is adoration;
Let us cease this altercation,
Yonder, see, the poet lies.

Fairy, your discrimination
Seemingly for relaxation
Deals in generalities.

Hidden in a heather bell
Is the poet's ritournelle;
Echo hid it there;
Hid it from the air,
Hid it from the rain:
Blow, wind, blow,
And shake it out again;
Let it fly—
Liberty.

Their Wayward Round

What is liberty—come tell;
Is it to be free and well—
Free to roam the plain,
Free to sail the main—
Blow, wind, blow,
Shake it out again;
Let it fly—
Liberty.

Is it having all we need,
All we ask, and all we heed?
Is it to maintain our right,
And for party views to fight?
Is it anything we know
Or anything we feign?
Blow, wind, blow,
Shake it out again;
Let it fly—
Liberty.

'Tis to feel nought lives alone,
Any wrong must be our own,
'Tis to say it and to show it,
Hating evil when we know it.

The Mountain

'Tis when looking in the rose
Of the fairest joy that grows,
One can say—O gentle eye,
Would you bloomed beneath a sky
Of wider capability;
Would in radiant light you grew
Drinking a celestial dew;
Learning a seraphic lore,
On a brighter, fairer shore—
Gloria in Excelsis.

Chant Royal.

He rides in splendour on his golden throne,
Day's brilliant star, who, looking downward, sees
How far and wide beneath his shining zone
The deep blue depths lie idle and at ease;
He sees how rich, though summer is away,
Shows the fair sky upon this perfect day.
Like some strange season waiting to adore
An unknown realm, a far celestial shore,
The floating clouds in airy snow-drifts white
Essay to show behind the azure door
A dream of Eden's winter, pure and bright.

Their Wayward Round

Or so the little tarn imagines lone,
And with its moralising now agrees
Every heather bell and every stone,
And every faintly modulated breeze;
Its depths are all awake, alive, and gay
With mimic splendours that do lightly play,
Cheating the birds so they forget to soar.
For every tint yon airy palace wore
This little pool doth share, in common right
With all the mighty lakes that ever bore
A dream of Eden's winter, pure and bright.

When stormy clouds athwart the sky are blown,
Hurled by the northern blasts that pierce and freeze—
When thunderous powers in warring state are thrown,
Reverberating o'er the hills and leas—
Then in what hues of terror, dark and gray,
Of ruffled agitation and dismay,
The lakelet lies beneath the gathering roar,
Beneath the loud tempestuous outpour;
What rapid shadows of the lofty height
Dart o'er its surface; who can then restore
A dream of Eden's winter, pure and bright?

The Mountain

Thou sky, affection's type in thee is shown;
Thine azure charm, thy fair appearances,
These are the loves that every soul hath known,
The perfect joys and fellowships are these;
These are thy beauty; as they lightly stray,
Robing the earth in glorious array,
So kindliness and truth in plenteous store,
Filling the spirit to its utmost core,
Scatter the glory of their silent might;
A lofty happiness, a perfect lore,
A dream of Eden's winter, pure and bright.

And as the tarn reflected light doth own,
Showing the colour of those changeful seas,
The will may mirror the affection's tone
Transmitting good or harmful sympathies;
Then sky be fair and let the tarn obey.
A single shadow may make lengthened stay,
Be fraught with consequences touching more
Than clouds perceive in that they wander o'er;
But millions reck the change, and feel the light
Grow less, while vainly they implore
A dream of Eden's winter, pure and bright.

L'Envoi.

O subtle sky, be not too warm, too frore,
Let all distinguish heaven from heaven's floor
Dwell thou in fairest hues for aye bedight,
And let the tarn reflect thee evermore,
A dream of Eden's winter, pure and bright.

THE VALLEY

PEACE

O WILLOW, by the wind upblown,
  I hear thy gentle sighing;
Like silver tongues thy leaves are thrown,
  And upward would be flying;
      They rise and fall,
      They point and call,
They sing a meadow madrigal.

Whom wave ye to, ye silken plumes,
  Would ye recall the summer?
An autumn light the air illumes,
  O greet the later comer;
      From tree and bush
      A golden flush
Replies to ye with deepening blush.

Their Wayward Round

The berries of the wild dog-rose
  The hedges now are sealing,
Where summer secrets in repose
  Await the spring's revealing.
    A crimson sign
    Has eglantine,
And earth locks up her sweets divine.

How fair are trees when leaves are red,
  How fair when leaves are falling;
And still how fair when leaves are fled,
  And homeless winds are calling.
    Though they are gone
    Lament we none,
For hopeful peace remains alone.

O cheering sign! O seal of peace!
  What comfort art thou bringing,
When spring shall give thy bond release,
  And waken thee with singing,
    "Go fly, go fly,
    Sad memory,
And let the bright To Be come by."

The Valley

O stunted leaf, that with faint hand
  The fickle breeze is holding,
The early blight that touched the land
  Prevented thy unfolding;
    Fall down—be free,
    For in the tree
The spirit weaves new life for thee.

Immortal Love is treasuring
  The beauty of thy being,
And all thy life is measuring
  Though thou art yet unseeing;
    Lie low, lie low,
    Pass on and go
To learn what every leaf must know.

Whether the secrets of the moon,
  When they to earth come sliding
Adown the night's most silent noon,
  To find deep-rooted hiding;
    Whether the sound
    That underground
From gem to gem goes lightly round:

Their Wayward Round

Whether the nothing of a sleep
  Unthinking and unknowing,
Whose calm oblivion, pure and deep,
  Its perfectness is showing;
    For well we know
    How brightly glow
The morning eyes that slumber so:

What is't to thee? for thou hast been—
  O thou hast done thy duty,
A little known, a little seen,
  A little learnt of beauty;
    And thou didst prove
    The ball of love,
Didst catch and fling it high above.

It ever flies from earth to heaven
  So swiftly none can view it;
At every touch with speed 'tis driven,
  The lightning would pursue it.
    In vain, in vain,
    O'er sea and plain
The baffled dart sinks down again.

The Valley

From many a hand receiving strength,
  From many a soul a glory,
It tells the constant tale at length,
  The old familiar story;
    Let peace be here
    Be glory there—
A gloriole for peace to wear.

Who flings it bravely in the air
  Shall sling a stone at sorrow;
Shall light a star to fright despair,
  Shall never fear the morrow;
    That soul shall flit
    And rise with it,
And on a deathless throne shall sit.

And when into the dome of light
  It disappears for ever,
No more to take an earthward flight
  Some virtue it may sever
    From Eden's wood
    For earthly good,
Some new unknown exalted mood.

Their Wayward Round

A falling fruit of golden grain
  To burst the sky asunder,
When peace is love and love doth gain
  A more supernal wonder;
    When nought shall roll
    A base control
On the ambition of the soul.

When that engrafted tree which stands
  And bears beneath the heaven
Fair beauty-branches from dead lands
  Itself shall be upriven,
      Itself shall rise
      To fairer skies,
A scion fit for paradise.

Then flowers shall bud, bright blooms appear,
  Where now a lonely blossom
Unfoldeth slowly year by year
  A faintly fragrant bosom;
      A rose from weed—
      An oak from seed—
Yet stay, there is enough for need:

The Valley

And pleasant is this quiet vale
  Where melodies are meeting;
The warm noon sends a balmy gale,
  The birds do give it greeting;
    "Behold," they say,
    "How fair the day:
What gentle breezes pass this way!"

Hark, hark, I hear the miller call,
  The horses are got ready;
How yonder mighty stream doth brawl
  About the mill-wheel steady.
    And scarcely seen,
    I glide between
The meadow grasses thick and green.

The thumping wheel is beating time
  To voices that are coming
From yonder schoolhouse 'neath the lime,
  Where human bees are humming
    In rhythm grave
    Some learned stave
That floats along my listening wave.

Their Wayward Round

A little maid walks on by me,
  A little pail she carries;
For ripe blackberries looketh she,
  And now and then she tarries
    To call a bird
    With loving word
(Now with her song the air is stirred):

  If I had thy wings, O dove,
    I would not fly away;
  I have many things to love,
    And many things to say.

  I would not seek the woody dell
    And leave the sunny air;
  For O, I love the meadow well,
    I love the heaven fair.

  Why art thou in a hurry, dove?
    I would not hurry so;
  I would not leave the meadow, dove,
    Until the sun is low.

The Valley

Dove, I have a holiday,
  And gladly do I roam;
Here for ever could I stay,
  Unless they call me home.

Dove, from out the brook I drink;
  It is so clear to see—
I shall only go, I think,
  If mother calls to me.

If mother—O, there goes the man
  Who keeps the sheep so white;
I wonder if he really can
  Be that same one—he might—

Who sang the song about "no fall,"
  That Mr Great-heart heard;
I know it—mother taught me all—
  I know it every word.

"He that is down"—that first doth come;
  The lilies grew about—
O, I will go and look for some,
  And see if they are out.

Their Wayward Round

Ballade.

Over the buttercups timid and tender,
  Lines of light through the branches rain;
Making those isles of liquid splendour
  That touch the grass with a golden stain,
  And many a shining, quivering vein,
Fairy captives; all softly blent
  Into a marvellous sweet domain,
A bright and beautiful continent.

Leaflet shadows that taper slender
  May cloud the light and obscure the chain;
Yet every ray hath a fay defender
  Who doth the butterfly path maintain;
  And never the radiant bond may wane;
Though for a season in darkness pent,
  Anon it glistens and gleams again,
A bright and beautiful continent.

So pendulous worlds their way surrender,
  Linked by the hidden invincible rein;
A lightning road that will ne'er engender
  Lonely isles in the measureless main;
  From star to star the pathway is plain:
Eternity's rippling smile hath lent
  The dimpled dance that doth attain
A bright and beautiful continent.

The Valley

For ever there riseth a sweet refrain
From the golden glorious instrument;
The flowers, the earth, and the starry train,
A bright and beautiful continent.

Chant Royal.

The birds are singing in the boughs o'erhead,
The bees are buzzing through the woody dell,
Myriads of insects throng the watery bed
Where the forget-me-nots in liquid cell
Hide from the dragon-fly, who to and fro
In ardent quest and lofty state doth go;
On fairy mission sent, he chases there
Some viewless elf, who, rounding in the air,
Leads him a mazy dance the livelong day;
And leafy whisperers watch everywhere,
While nature on her mighty harp doth play.

The chords sound on by million voices fed:
The distant chiming of the far sheep-bell,
The breeze, slow passing where the coverts spread,
Waking another note from Philomel;
And yet another, richer, and full low;
The alders bow, gesticulating slow

Their Wayward Round

In admiration of a strain so rare;
A murmurous assent the grasses dare:
The whizzing grasshopper has much to say,
In active gambol light and debonair,
While nature on her mighty harp doth play

The dome of light to harmony is wed,
A ceaseless music caged within a shell;
But not from these alone the notes are shed,
These but accompany the ritournelle
Of human passions; these a shadow throw
Over the light of feeling that doth glow
From such sweet seconding; for there is ne'er
A mortal strain, however dark or fair,
But finds some chord from this orchestra stray,
And oft true companionship declare
While nature on her mighty harp doth play.

Few songs of earth go unaccompanied;
The gracious mother holds the magic spell
To knowledge of the spirit perfected
By first considering her blossoms well;
For these are Beauty's alphabet; they show
How mind superior to them may grow,

Which, but for such considering, would wear
Inferiority, the baneful snare
Of beasts that perish in a dull decay,
Self-stifled in their lone forgotten lair,
While nature on her mighty harp doth play.

Though singers weary, though the songs are fled,
Though one by one like autumn leaves they fall,
These strains are heard; and like a guiding thread
That circles round a mazy citadel,
From shine of pleasure to the shade of woe,
Every turning of the path they know.
The song is sweet alone, and like a prayer
That heaven has put into a world's despair;
And heaven to praise, and not the prayer alway
Is good; for singers taste of angels' fare
While nature on her mighty harp doth play.

L'Envoi.

For though thou canst not cure eternal care,
Yet peaceful mother, thou canst sooth and share;
May few then turn uncomforted away
Who to the palace Beautiful repair,
While nature on her mighty harp doth play.

Their Wayward Round

Hark, mid the voices uprising around
There cometh anon a murmuring sound,
A fairy echo that lightly falls
From yonder castle's enchanted walls.

(Seeming to say) A fateful doom
Hangs over me in a cloudy gloom;
For never a being of mortal race
May long inhabit this mystical place.

They pass into shapes grotesque and strange,
Many a one have I seen thus change;
Through my bosky alley and cypress grove
In the peaceful night do I see them move.

There came a king to my outer gate,
With many a chieftain blithe and elate;
He said, "I have taken this ancient hall,
Come, erect my standard above the wall."

They entered with joy and nature smiled;
They lived for a while, and were then beguiled
By the gradual doom of a mighty power,
And their numbers dwindled from hour to hour.

The Valley

Down by the moat where the osiers grow,
Where the reeds and rushes rock to and fro,
As a flock of herons those chieftains sail
And softly sigh on the sighing gale.

The king went hunting adown the glade,
And far in the forest his steed was stayed;
He returned no more, but a statue of stone
Arose in the courtyard and stands alone.

Once I afforded quiet and rest
To a band of monks and pilgrims blest;
Yon pathway is bordered with ghostly firs,
But the shrine was lacking in worshippers.

I sheltered the Lady Amabel,
Who here with a friendly few did dwell,
Till one by one to their fated lot
They swiftly hastened and were not.

A stately peacock, a leaf, a rose,
Three silent statues of still repose,
A willow that rustles a requiem
O'er a tomb—and no more remains of them.

Their Wayward Round

There came a princess with a courtly train,
And my halls resounded with mirth again,
There ne'er was a lady in all the land
So merry as Princess Halzeraband.

"O my life is a merry burlesque," said she,
"Parasitical fruit on a heavenly tree;
I laugh as the gay little blossoms are twirled,
I laugh at them all, and I laugh at the world."

A dancing rivulet ripples along
Where the distant rocks stand mighty and strong;
It never was known in the days of yore,
And the laughing princess is seen no more.

At night, when the moon is wrapped in a cloud,
The grasses dream of a shadowy crowd,
Gliding along over turret and stair,
'Till silently lost in the peaceful air.

O fair are grasses fresh and green
Wherein the harmless snake,
The timid worm of silver sheen,
His agile way doth take,
And like a fairy streamlet glides into the alder brake.

The Valley

A fairy runlet—ere you cry
  Behold! it is no more;
A silver flash that glistens by,
  And then, as though it wore
A magic garb, it disappears through visionary door.

The glimmer of a shining stream
  That flashes down a glade
Where elfin apparitions dream
  In filmy ambuscade,
Where nought of any woefulness did ever yet invade.

Where all the drowsy afternoon
  Is hummingly beguiled
By fairies spinning some cocoon
  They found in regions wild;
The golden life of unknown worm to sleep long reconciled.

Full many a ditty do they sing
  That drowsily doth go,
Bidding the linnet fold her wing
  In slumber light below,
Where flickering shades and flecks of light are waving to
    and fro.

Their Wayward Round

"Fly, wheel, fly,
The pupa sleeps in the mould;
Fly, wheel, fly,
And make a mantle of gold;
There never was yet a fairy queen
But loved to wander in silken sheen,
And brush the grass in the mead between;
Fly, wheel, fly.

"Turn, wheel, turn,
And let your turning be true;
Turn, wheel, turn,
And flutter the dainty hue:
When the infant moon shall exalt her bow
An elf with a gossamer string shall go
And wing a delicate shaft below,
Turn, wheel, turn.

"Far—afar—
The arrow shall fly to the earth
Far—afar—
And give the butterfly birth.
Away in the forest there dawns a light
Seen of the woodruff, timid and white,
And a captive sunders the tomb of night—
Far—afar."

The Valley

They weave it deftly through the day,
Beneath the moon they spin;
They catch the silver tinctured ray
And twist it softly in;
They make a mantle for the queen, a mantle fine and thin.

She will not wear it till the night
Be lit by moon at full;
She will not wear it till the bright
Young asphodels they cull,
And therewith trace her name on it in poems beautiful.

Every petal folded up
Shall have a meaning strange,
Every tilt of bloomy cup
Shall make the rhythm change
In rippling sheen of phantasies that blend and rearrange.

Everything by beauty lent
Must have a part thereon;
There colour, sound, and sentiment
Make perfect union;
Ah, see it 'neath the orbed moon in light chameleon.

Their Wayward Round

O hear it when the lunar bow
  Is breathing o'er the land,
The fitful sighs that come and go
  By wingèd vapours fanned;
What low preluding melodies, what answers sweet and
    bland.

Or feel it when the fairy flowers
  Are full of sympathies,
How it distils enchanted powers
  Within their radiant eyes,
And all the air is thrilled and full of gentle memories.

So from the fragrant grassy meads
  The earthly flowers upfling,
Vague sweets, like high ennobled deeds
  From lofty souls that spring,
Perfected, holy, and devoid of vain imagining.

Or like the wreathing clouds that all
  Creation can exhale;
The adorations mystical
  That mountain, glen, and vale,
And everything in happiness can offer without fail.

The Valley

From hearts unconscious what they give,
From springs that know and sigh;
From sources that alone do live
Thereon immortally,
Its cloudy steps the incense curls ethereally high.

Unseen, unseen of mortal gaze
It rises overhead,
From many a throne with gems ablaze,
From many a lowly bed,
And up and down each airy way the stately angels tread.

Light stepping down the waving stair,
Soft vanishing away
Within the far recipient air,
They move by night and day;
Though mortals wake or sleep beneath the vision is for aye.

Lo, hitherward light balancing
Are they descending fleet;
And vials made of gold they bring;
They come with silent feet,
And dip into the fiery well of adoration sweet.

Their Wayward Round

Then laden thus do they return,
Distilling fragrant breath;
The tongues of flame they scatter burn
Into the earth beneath;
To every bud they fall upon a perfume they bequeath.

There are no other paths than these,
Whereby these shapes descend;
Roll, inspirated essences,
And to the light ascend,
That shining ones their blissful way across the earth may wend.

Trail not upon the murky ground
A vapour dead supine,
Nor blown along the wave be found
Low tossed upon the brine;
Benighted are these messengers without such aid divine.

They wander over deserts drear,
They traverse regions dun,
They wait until the roadway clear
Shall circle to the sun;
They stay full long in silentness with all their work undone.

The Valley

You hear them in the wind and rain,
  You hear them in the sea,
They call outside the fast-shut pane,
  "Have you forgotten me?
Your hate brings woe on many a one, although you may not
    see.

And you have shut a cruel gate,
  To bar us out of heaven."
E'en while they speak importunate
  Then oft the deed is given,
The bars unlock, the clouds roll high in snowy billows
    driven.

The voices soar; they hail the star
  That shines without alloy,
They pass into the light afar,
  They hasten back with joy,
And peace is in the heart below, a peace none can destroy.

No strife, no pain, no bitterness,
  No vague regretful want:
The birds are blithe in dim recess,
  And singing is not scant,
For they have caught the echoings of melodies (They chant).

Their Wayward Round

Be glad to be,
  Nor sigh,
For peace is free,
  Is nigh;
  Mourn not,
  Scorn not,
  Weep not,
  Sleep not,
Be glad to be,
  Nor sigh.

Of deed, and word,
  And thought,
A prayerful sword
  Is wrought;
  Lightly,
  Lightly,
  Flash it
  Brightly;
Let its beam be caught.

The Valley

A fiery goad
  Of state
At Eden's broad
  White gate
  Shaming
  Error,
  Flaming
  Terror,
On the curse of hate.

This triune band
  O find;
The tongue, the hand,
  The mind,
  Ranging,
  Ranging,
  Ever
  Changing,
Learning every kind.

If dumb, remote
  Delayed,
Should be the note
  Essayed,

Their Wayward Round

Ever
See how,
Waiting
Thee now,
Others may be played.

Though sad through age
And pain,
With these engage
Amain,
Having
Given
Seven times
Seven,
Tell them o'er again.

And heaven rend,
Proclaim
That life's true end
And aim
Is in
Praising
And
Upraising
Adoration's flame.

The Valley

The lofty hymn,
  The verse,
To seraphim
  Rehearse;
  Changeless
  Fashion,
  Grandest
  Passion
In Thought's universe.

Aurora mute,
  Upstream
Thy resolute
  Bright beam;
  Pale
  Devotion
  Calms
Her Ocean
In a frozen dream.

Yet should vain grief
  Still cling,
And no relief
  E'er bring

Their Wayward Round

Charm it,
Charm it,
Do not
Harm it,
'Tis a holy thing.

And O forget
Thy moan,
A darker yet
Is known;
Find it,
Find it,
Seek to
Bind it,
'Twill illume thine own.

Let grief be this;
A cold,
Rare chrysalis
Of gold;
Ponder,
Ponder,
On the
Wonder
How it will unfold.

The Valley

O thou art not
  Alone,
Nor thine the lot
  Of one;
  Hither,
  Thither,
  Fleetly,
  Sweetly,
Are thy servants gone.

O give more praise
  (They say),
For we would raise
  Alway,
  Sweeter
  Singing,
  Nearer
  Bringing
Thee to light of day.

What then art thou?
  Take heed—
For thou dost sow
  Strange seed;

Their Wayward Round

Guiding,
Guiding,
Sending,
Bending
Armies with a deed.

Exert, bring forth,
And show
Thy native worth,
And know,
Duly,
Duly,
Gladly,
Truly,
Who hath made it grow.

O hit the mark,
The star
Beyond the dark
Afar,
Wing thy
Spirit
To
Inherit
Heaven's rolling car.

The Valley

Beyond the rim
Of night,
Beyond the dim
Dull light,
From the
Bowstring
Let the
Shaft wing
In the future bright.

When that, too, draws
Anear,
Then without pause
Or fear,
Shoot
Another,
And
Another,
Overleap the year.

The present will
Transmit
The dart, until
'Tis fit

Their Wayward Round

That the
Archer,
Fearless
Searcher,
Shall live on with it.

Look up, look out,
Be tost
Above all doubt,
Nor lost
In a
Seeming
Bygone dreaming,
Hymn thy Pentecost.

Drain sorrow's cup,
Nor frown;
Drink Lethe up,
Disown
All the
Malice
In the
Chalice,
Fling the goblet down.

The Valley

Be bold—be mild,
  Be true;
The earth has smiled
  On you:
  Flowers,
  Showers,
  Wondrous
  Powers;
'Twas a glorious view.

Go give the grasp,
  The touch,
The friendly clasp
  To such
  Toilers,
  Moilers,
  Panting,
  Wanting
Courage overmuch.

O lofty heart,
  Awake!
'Tis not thy part
  To break.

Their Wayward Round

Eyes were
Tearful,
Souls were
Fearful,
All for thy dear sake.

O child of life,
Abide
Amid the strife,
Thy guide
Walketh
Smiling,
Thee
Beguiling
O'er the restless tide.

The sea of faith,
Whose bed
Is love; no wraith
Doth tread
Where the
Rocking
Waves are
Locking,
With a glory spread.

The Valley

O bed that bears
  The sea,
What splendour fares
  In thee?
  Wide
  Pavilion,
  For a
  Million
Wonders sweet and free.

Deep down amid
  The waves,
What joys are hid
  In caves;
  Shells
  Unshaking,
  Scarcely
  Quaking,
While the tempest raves.

Look down, and gaze
  Where shine
A flood of rays
  Divine,

Their Wayward Round

Wild to
Capture,
In a
Rapture,
Glories argentine.

O seek these things,
Endure
Glad wanderings
Secure;
'Neath the
Land, or
'Neath the
Splendour
Of the ocean pure.

Plunge, Thou Divine,
And prove
The jewelled mine
Of love,
Leaving,
Leaving,
Shallow
Grieving,
In the grave above.

The Valley

O seek the deep
  Calm vale,
The highest steep
  Then scale ;
    Earth
    And ocean,
    Pause
    And motion,
  Learn the varied tale.

  And with the time
    Move on,
  The winter rime
    Still con,
    Crystals
    Lying,
    Melting,
    Dying,
  Sleeping roots upon.

  The kernel slip
    From shell,
  The truth outdip
    From well,

Their Wayward Round

Seeing,
Feeling,
And
Revealing
Love in parable.

The thought of man
To teach,
What language can—
What speech?
Nature's
Pages,
Features,
Ages,
Hard are they to reach.

To move the mask
O seek;
But ye must ask,
Must speak,
And the
Hidden
Still is
Bidden,
For the veil is weak.

The Valley

Eyes are not strong
(Alas!)
To see the throng
That pass,
Dimly,
Dimly,
Watch they,
Catching
Phantoms in a glass.

Yet wonderment,
Surprise,
So lightly pent,
There lies,
Hiding,
Hiding,
Aye
Abiding,
In these mysteries.

Be patient all,
Love more,
Though mystical
The lore,

Their Wayward Round

Higher,
Higher
Yet,
Aspire,
Love, and so adore.

Where secret foes
Are found,
Go, make repose
Abound;
Holy,
Holy,
Holy,
Holy,
Let the strain resound.

So sing they, in voices entrancing,
That seem to take shape as they fly,
For lo, where the eve is advancing,
They tint all the clouds in the sky.

O there, where the valley is spreading
Afar into woodland and plain,
What bright apparitions are treading
The sunset's imperial main.

The Valley

A crimson light over the meadow
  And over the forest doth go,
Touched with a deepening shadow
  Where heavy storm cloudlets lie low.

Lie low with a glittering border
  Embroidered with silver and gold,
Advancing in stately disorder,
  Soon, soon yon bright star to enfold.

Above them, pellucid and mellow,
  A sea, without shore, without shape,
Lies touched with the faintest of yellow
  And tenderest green of a grape.

There fountains and fairy bowers
  Are melting to mingle and die,
Like petals of heavenly flowers
  Thrown down from a loftier sky.

And lightly they fall in the ocean,
  They fade in the emerald tide;
They sink with a gentle commotion,
  Uprising with life magnified.

Their Wayward Round

O this is the dream of a glory,
  The dream of a wonderful hall,
Where Beauty emblazons the story
  Of Time on Eternity's wall.

Where many a trinket discarded,
  Though mighty and strong in its age,
Now shines in the palace, long hoarded,
  And gleams on the picture and page.

Where delicate shades of affection,
  That once were so rare and so wise,
Now seem in that bright resurrection,
  Like gnats in the sweet summer skies.

Their souls have expanded to lightning,
  They soar, and they float, and they run;
They dart where the glory is brightening,
  And swiftly recircle the sun.

And there in that shimmering glamour,
  The thoughts that in wordland were pent,
Now hang up their cumbersome armour
  So battered, so broken, so bent.

The Valley

Ancient, unnoted, unheeded,
  'Mid sinuous mazes of sound,
By thunders of might superseded,
  Sweet memory's music is found.

And masked in the various vestures
  A mystical pageant is played,
With antics, and colours, and gestures,
  A wonderful harlequinade.

O foolish delight! yet alluring—
  Bright sun, thou art sunk in the cloud,
The gold and the crimson immuring
  In stealthily darkening shroud.

Adieu, ye bright flowers descending,
  Down, down to the depths are ye borne;
O where are your harmonies tending?
  Do they burnish the floor of the morn?

Go, go where delight is beholden,
  Fade, fade from the evening gray;
Depart, where that mystery golden
  Is ever beholding the day.

Their Wayward Round

Rolled from thy view, great light,
  Rolled from thy view,
Pass all thy legions bright
  In retinue;
The woods, the glades, the fountains,
  The hills, the vales, the mountains,
Roll from thy view.

An endless calvalcade
  Gliding away,
Far in the gloom they fade,
  Pilgrims in gray;
And paler, fainter, dimmer,
Dies far in distant glimmer
  The flag of day.

Sing, though we pass along
  "We shall return";
Sing with triumphant song,
  For we discern
The future's summer lightning
Far, far above us brightening,
  In rays that burn.

The Valley

Though banners pass thee by
  Near to thy throne,
Though bands eternally
  Glide quickly on;
And though the steep way hide us,
The lamps of night shall guide us,
  Many a one.

Back to thy throne again,
  Hastening round
Over the tranquil plain
  Let hymns resound:
  In all that passes by thee,
In all that comes a-nigh thee,
  May peace be found.

THE GLEN

REST

SILENT glen, O blossom small and low,
The gathering shades proclaim a solemn hour,
When day adown the westering steep must go,
And night advances all her subtle power;
Felt silently alike by creature, tree, and flower.

As spring (soft passing o'er the furrowed plain,
Where lie, embosomed in the rugged mould,
The scattered atoms of the slumbering grain
Dreaming in sepulchres apart and cold)
Full lightly breathes on them, and with a lance of gold.

A piercing sunbeam, like a trumpet note,
Wakens them fully with a mellow sound,
While balmy airs like angels lightly float
Enticing them to issue from the ground
And join the new-born strain re-echoing around;

So, with a soft and gentle influence
Does night emit a penetrating sigh,
That, rising, touches with a grateful sense
The golden seedlings of the purple sky,
And they steal through the air and blossom radiantly.

Ye earthly flowers, behold the stars your souls,
Pale, pale your lamps at these immortal ghosts;
And ye, whose death-bell now serenely tolls,
Depart, unsmitten by the nearing frosts;
Unite in yonder sky, and with your million hosts,

There, in those regions of unbounded space,
Frame stately dwellings with fair hues enlined;
Give all thy native beauties there a place,
Making fit mansions for all humankind,
And perfect happiness for universal mind.

But ye who yet remain, close now your eyes,
And look not on the spirits that are free;
Or dream, and let your wreathèd phantasies
Float on an airless visionary sea,
Where none may faintly guess what radiant joys may be.

Their Wayward Round

Dissolve your thoughts—until they change and seem
  Like mirrored blossoms of the daffodil,
When that bright being hangs its head to dream
  Beside a stream all motionless, until
The ruffling airs obscure the shadow in the rill.

The trees are still—yon hoary silent sage
  Holds in his grasp a calm close-lidded bird,
A silent nightingale in leafy cage,
  Drowsing in canopied delight, unstirred
By sound of flitting leaf whose fall is faintly heard.

A bird above—but down beneath the bole
  And gnarlèd root stirs something sedulous;
Busy in darkened quietude a mole
  Builds with anxiety its little house;
A creature patient, small, discreet, and timorous.

Thou tree—what dreamest of? Say, do these twain,
  The bird enshrouded in her quiet nest,
And little mole, thy rapt attention gain?
  Canst say if life upon the branch be best,
Or whether in thy twisted root is found most rest?

The Glen

Art thou that tree of life? and dost thou bear
  Strange leaves of perfect shape and evergreen?
Hast thou fine blossoms, beautiful and rare,
  Shining in glory thy dark boughs between?
Mayhap thou dreamest so, and I do see thy dream.

The vision shows thee spreading wide and tall,
  Filling the glen with thy circumference;
Thyself a forest, individual,
  Whose bloomy sprays a brilliant light dispense,
Each flower unrolling there in sweet magnificence.

Bright plumaged birds flit on from spray to spray,
  And swift ephemera select a sweet
Whereon they rest throughout the endless day,
  That nevermore a gloomy hour shall meet;
And there the nightingale still sleeps in cool retreat.

And voices float amid thy blossomings,
  Where petals hold the scintillating dew;
Telling thy praise in restful murmurings,
  Thy beauty, and thy wondrous shape and hue;
These flowers are symbols of affection fond and true.

Their Wayward Round

(There cries a voice) O bloom on which I sip,
  Thou gracious smile, O what so good and dear
(Then answer some) This pure cherubic lip
  Yet rarer and diviner doth appear,
(And yet another cries) How sweet a bloom is here!

Then one upon the topmost branch alit,
  Unsealed of any save the purple plumed,
Bids all fly thither, where the flowers emit
  A lofty beauty with rare charm perfumed;
The very heaven above is with their grace illumed.

Whereat some rise, and soar into the mist,
  And they are happy in that topmost crown,
Because there swiftly rise to those who list
  Quick messages from out the stem so brown;
Words from the ancient root that lies full deeply down.

O tree of life, thy flowers are fair,
  Of many a kind;
And each affection blossoms there
  To glad the mind;
And sweeter the flowerets ever will prove
To hearts that are rooted and grounded in love.

The Glen

O brother heart, O sister hand!
O parent smile,
With all the fond endearing band
That can beguile
The wanderer over the land and the sea,
How fair do ye bloom on the heavenly tree.

O happy living ornament;
O ancient spell,
Of tunèd tones so different
Yet parallel,
Decking the bough like the leaf and the rose,
Giving and taking the hue of repose.

For ye beloved and vanished ones
Long fallen asleep,
Shall mourners fill the air with moans,
Lament, and weep?
O no, ye are resting from sorrow and care
In the heart of the tree—they will meet with ye there,

And ye who living coldly here
Made life forlorn,
Who passed on unlamented bier
Into the morn,
O death shall restore ye whom life drew afar,
For love lightens up from the root to the star.

Their Wayward Round

And there within a brighter sky
That will not fade,
Within a purer mystery
A home is made;
O there may the sorrowful sleep in their nest,
Awaiting the spring in the garden of rest.

There are no scentless flowers
In Eden's bowers;
No violets blind,
Such as we find
Upon this earth unkind.

Yet hark, what fairy calleth?
What scent falleth?
(It says) no violet
On this earth set
Hath blossomed scentless yet.

But the kindly heaven
To some hath given
An essence rare,
A thing too fair
To live within this air.

The Glen

The fairies may reap it;
  Yes, and they keep it;
  So, little mind,
  Be thou refined;
There are no violets blind.

I asked an Angel if the small
  Sweet souls of flowers died?
He answered: Who can speak for all?
  No rule can be applied.

While many noxious blossoms die,
  The lovely flowers live,
And in the home of God on high
  Eternal beauty give.

While unrepentant sinners go
  To death—oblivion,—
The righteous, like fair flowers, know
  How life can blossom on.

Yet mortals who seemed most divine
  Have died! beyond all trace.
While some vile weeds transfigured shine,
  And deck the Holiest Place.

Their Wayward Round

Lo, the eyes of heaven, for ever contemplating
The cloudless beauty of eternal day;
Within their depths what mighty shadows play!
Across what fields divine of perfect meditating
Does the Idea of the Human stray.
Free to love or hate, to mock or pray?
What winged imaginings have they in constant waiting,
Pleading remembrance in a cadence caught
From that faint cross-bound form whose strain
To listening ears is with fair music fraught;
Remember me—and bid those live again
Who now are curtained in unsleeping thought,
Eternal melody that ne'er is sung in vain.

Sonnet.

Following thought who glides to realms of sleep,
The will (faint-footed, whose drooped wings confess
That they are weighed with dews of weariness)
Moves slowly on; and with stretched hand would keep
The shade from passing where those regions steep
All wakeful fancies in their fond caress;
But seeing that the phantom flies no less,
Makes sudden grasp to save it from the deep,

And holds—ah what? 'tis but a mantle-dream;
This the pursuer bears unto the mind,—
And they know not the difference, nor deem
How the thought fled; in gladness are they blind;
E'en so may all, when life withdraws its beam
The sweet exchange thus ignorantly find.

Chant Royal.

O solemn sky, thou bed of liquid pansies,
Where glide bright glowworms luminously pure,
Where white cloud-butterflies bewinged with fancies
Sleep in the moonlight, or their souls immure
In purple depth of draught intoxicate;
A strange love philtre ruling o'er the fate
Of snowy owls, that from the glen replying
Rise to the lofty spell, and slowly flying
Hang in the silent air.—O sky, what call
Comes thrilling thee and these, in rapture crying,
"Shine on, O Light, for ever over all?"

Again, again, the mellow voice advances,
The sleeping clouds no more the sound endure;
But wake from out their dreams of sweet romances,
Visions of cool and dewy garniture,
Wherewith some noonday warmth they will abate,
And many lily blossoms decorate.

Their Wayward Round

Quaint gems that as they fall shall aye be trying
To see themselves i' the sun, for ever vieing
For meed of beauty in the rainbow hall;
The clouds awake—is it the night-breeze sighing?
Shine on, O Light, for ever over all!

It breaks the spell,—and down among the branches
The owls, oblivious of the cloudy lure,
Drop silently from out their solemn trances,
Save one, who sleeping certainly and sure
Floats in the airy sea; a silent freight
Of rapt repose, unruffled, isolate.
O mazy stars, still hither, thither nighing,
No earthly bird is this ye are descrying;
Vast, vast in size, it spreads majestical
And motionless, upon this song relying,
Shine on, O Light, for ever over all!

Look down, ye stars, from your celestial dances,
Behold the wide white pinions; look from your
Eternal thrones and scatter lightning glances
Between these airy plumes; so may ye cure
The gloom beneath this throne of pendant state;
(That with this melody is animate)

The Glen

The Spirit of the Age am I, supplying
Sorrow and joy unto the earth, low-lying
In shadow of my presence and my thrall,
Whence sounds the clarion voice electrifying,
Shine on, O Light, for ever over all!

And lo! above me through the starry lances,
Whose shining points gleam fewer yet and fewer,
The white moon glides; and all my soul enhances
With opal tints, that brighter still and newer
Make play of glory; whilome how elate
Are all those phantoms 'neath my shade who wait,
And ever through my wide wings eager prying,
My constant mutability decrying,
Behold the true soul immemorial;
And hymn the paens loudly multiplying,
Shine on, O Light, for ever over all!

Yea, draw to thy white throne, thou death-defying **L'Envoi.**
Pearl, this bird of Time; enskying
Within thyself all rest perennial,
And shine in thy calm splendour, aye undying,
Shine on, O Light, for ever over all!

Their Wayward Round

What sound—what sigh—what breathing—
  What fitful requiem
Amid the boughs light wreathing
  Now faintly rustles them?
    What sound—what sigh—what breathing?

A vagrant air—soft blowing;
  A murmur vague and strange;
'Tis governing my going;
  'Tis heralding my change.
    A vagrant air—soft blowing.

My songs will soon be over;
  They glide from out my power;
"Rest, rest," they say: "Thou rover,
  It is the restful hour."
    My songs will soon be over.

Thou mortal, cease to follow
  My windings farther on;
O rest thee in this hollow,
  The mossy turf upon,
    Thou mortal, cease to follow.

The Glen

To love the time of winter;
  To love the leafless tree,
The misty wold, and the upland cold;
  The hailstorm on the lea.

To bless thee, autumn, bless thee
  As herald of the snow;
With thy keen caress, and thy rustling dress,
  Thy winds that purely blow.

Thy fluttering swallows seeking
  The robin to entice,
While he stands brave and carols a stave
  In praise of frost and ice.

Thy cold bright sun so cheerful,
  The darkening of the eves;
Then gardeners turn the weeds as they burn.
  How sweet the smouldering leaves!

October's first-lit hearth fire
  In country cottage gay,
Speaks evermore of the season in store,
  And speeds it on its way.

Their Wayward Round

It cometh, cometh surely,
  The northern wintry blast;
The strange night sound that wanders around
  Like dreams of ages past.

The neutral tints, the shadows,
  The sleety gusts that fly,
The polished lights that glitter o' nights,
  The distance of the sky.

O wild and brave, thou winter!
  My heart is thine indeed.
In some dark time of thy beauty sublime
  Do thou my death-hour speed.

No farther may I bring thee,
  My journeying is o'er;
No longer may I sing thee
  As I have sung before.
    No farther may I bring thee.

The Glen

O rest thee—thou art weary;
  And I will thee beguile
From recollections eerie;
  Then sit thee down awhile.
    O rest thee—thou art weary!

No grief shall mar thy slumber,
  No care disturb thy breast;
No sounds the air encumber,
  The mill-wheel is at rest.
    No grief shall mar thy slumber.

No harm can now befall thee,
  No woe can work thee wrong;
No sorrow can enthrall thee
  Encircled with my song.
    No harm can now befall thee.

The fallen leaves have found thee,
  And have thee in their hold;
The trees stand close around thee,
  Thou wilt not be a-cold.
    The fallen leaves have found thee.

Their Wayward Round

O give no thought to toiling,
  The plough is put away;
To-morrow's light, uncoiling,
  Will show the Sabbath-day.
    O give no thought to toiling.

With sleep thine eyes are laden,
  O close each silent gate;
For me the fair Ice Maiden
  In realms afar doth wait.
    With sleep thine eyes are laden.

May all thy dreams be holy,
  And yet of truth so rife,
That thou shalt deem them solely
  A newer brighter life.
    May all thy dreams be holy!

The stars emit bright glances;
  Let all good slumbering eyes
Go light those happy dances
  That now do flood the skies.
    The stars emit bright glances.

The Glen

They gleam without cessation,
  How silently they roll;
And flash keen adoration,
  That lightning of the soul.
    They gleam without cessation.

Lo, lo, how they are leaping
  In quick elusive beam;
Sleep thou—and in thy sleeping
  Of measured rhythm dream.
    Lo, lo, how they are leaping!

The giant world goes spinning
  So fast, it seems quite still;
Yon whirl of fire is winning
  All slumber to its will.
    The giant world goes spinning.

With mighty wheel supernal,
  Beneath the sun and moon,
Evolves the thread eternal,
  Life's silken sweet cocoon.
    With mighty wheel supernal.

Their Wayward Round

Farewell! for I must leave thee;
  I see the forest loom,
Whose caverns deep receive me
  In gloom—in gloom—in gloom.
    Farewell! for I must leave thee.

I go—and yet I linger;
  I go—for here to be
Forbids the beckoning finger
  That onward draweth me.
    I go—and yet I linger.

O canst thou hear my voice now?
  Or have I passed thee by?
And do my tones rejoice now,
  Or sing they lullaby?—
    O canst thou hear my voice now?

Farewell—farewell—goodbye now;
  In silent rest remain;
Though sleep be very nigh now
  Yet shall we meet again.
    Farewell—farewell—good-bye now.

And yet—one word ere sleeping;
  Say, say that thou wilt give
My songs to human keeping,
  A little while to live.
    And yet—one word ere sleeping.

Speak, speak the word assuring;
  Not yet in sleep lie low.
What—is the charm enduring—
  Have I bewitched thee so?
    Speak, speak the word assuring.

O praise me, praise me, praise us;
  Praise me and all my kind;
We ask for hands to raise us
  To cool a thirsty mind.
    O praise me, praise me, praise us.

One word—one sign—one token—
  What—canst not rend the spell?—
And is thy rest unbroken,
  And canst thou sleep so well?
    One word—one sign—one token.

Their Wayward Round

No word? no look? no gesture?
  Asleep? And dost thou wear
That strange mysterious vesture
  That everything must bear?
    No word? No look? No gesture?

Alone my sighs are falling
  On tree, on mossy stone;
Nought, nought avails my calling,
  My voice goes on alone.
    Alone my sighs are falling.

My last farewell is paid thee,
  And now 'tis quiet all;
I would that I had made thee
  A sweeter madrigal,
    My last farewell is paid thee.

I would—O leaflet yellow,
  The waiting time is long;
But winter sleep may mellow
  And warm the wine of song.
    I would—O leaflet yellow.—

The Glen

Ye shades, so lightly lying
  Within my chilly wave,
Cease, cease your restless sighing,
  In sleep we too shall lave.
    Ye shades, so lightly lying—

See, see, what form is flitting
  Between the leafy ways?
Vague words and sighs emitting
  Hark, hark it speaking (says):

Lo, death and sleep reposing
  May seem alike and still;
So calm with eyes unclosing,
  But O, the one is chill.
    Lo, death and sleep reposing.

The vision may be cheated,
  The touch will strike the brain
It need not be repeated
  That thrill of icy pain.
    The vision may be cheated.

Their Wayward Round

Yet touch can ne'er unravel
  The whole wide difference;
That mystic way to travel
  Implores another sense.
    Yet touch can ne'er unravel.

As children love to ponder
  Provoking smiles of love,
Come wonder now, and wander,
  The stars they smile above.
    As children love to ponder.

Ye spirits, happy sources
  That are of sense the cause,
Methinks no strange divorces
  Are known amid your laws.
    Ye spirits, happy sources.

But all are gladly blended;
  The wave of death comes on,—
Another state is ended
  To float thee, Perfect One.
    But all are gladly blended.

The Glen

Unscattered, no disunion
  In elements revealed;
But knit in close communion
  With that which is unsealed.
    Unscattered, no disunion.

Quick, together curling
  Like the parchèd sky
Lost amid that whirling
  Day of mystery.
    Quick, together curling.

Whither—to what region
  Flashes it afar?
Tell me leafy legion,
  Tell me burning star.
    Whither—to what region?

What if the sky do sunder,
  Methinks I hear ye tell
That yet the flying wonder
  Shall gain the cool sweet cell.
    What if the sky do sunder.

Their Wayward Round

Cool, pleasant, spacious tower
  With the snow-white wall,
Where, where is built thy bower,
  Calm, fair, hexagonal.
    Cool, pleasant, spacious tower.

Does Time there fly for honey,
  The years to reimburse,
And from those regions sunny
  Content the universe?
    Does Time there fly for honey?

Love living in all Beauty
  Immortal, unforgot,
For ever feedeth duty
  Though summer suns are not.
    Love living in all Beauty.

Starlike, gracious, golden;
  Active, though recluse;
Near, though unbeholden,
  Distinctive so diffuse.
    Starlike, gracious, golden.

The Glen

Spirit of the Garden!
  Thee do we adore;
Hail! mysterious Warden;
  Let us love thee more.
    Spirit of the Garden!

And we love the anchor
  Of bright and boundless scope,
Assuaging grief and rancour;
  We rest, because we hope.
    And we love the anchor.

Casting down invention
  On that wave whose charm
Buoys in sweet suspension
  Everything from harm.
    Casting down invention.

O Soul of Life, aye gliding
  Like a flowing sea;
Moving, yet abiding,
  Universal, free.
    O Soul of Life, aye gliding.

Their Wayward Round

O ward, ever surely,
  Glide the wavelets blue
Drifting all securely
  To the Good and True.
    O ward, ever surely.

Like little silver swimmers
  That never ask a boat,
May be as daylight glimmers
  We sleep e'en while we float.
    Like little silver swimmers.

We sleep as we are drifting,
  But nought the speed abates,
The waves are shifting, shifting,
  And nothing ever waits.
    We sleep as we are drifting.

Like one in slumber talking
  Although no mortal wist,
See Life goes onward walking,
  A fair somnambulist.
    Like one in slumber talking.

The Glen

Where volcanoes rumble,
  And the mountains rock;
Where the whirlpools tumble
  In the earthquake shock—
    Where volcanoes rumble.

O'er the icy ridges,
  O'er the snow-clad steep,
O'er the frozen bridges
  Where the glaciers creep.
    O'er the icy ridges.

From the peak that sunders
  Needle-like and stiff;
From the drift that thunders
  Down the fearful cliff.
    From the peak that sunders.

From the wolf a-thirsting
  Who her foot has tracked—
From the sudden bursting
  Of the cataract.
    From the wolf a-thirsting.

Their Wayward Round

She is surely beckoned
  To the glad beyond;
And her steps are reckoned
  By a Father fond.
    She is surely beckoned.

She is safely guarded
  Through a path of blood;
She is gently warded
  Through a raging flood.
    She is safely guarded.

She will come victorious
  Through the bitter blast;
She will wake all glorious,
  Face to face at last.
    She will come victorious.

Joy glides from out of sorrow,
  This, this have we possessed;
Night turns to radiant morrow,
  And what hast thou, O Rest?
    Joy glides from out of sorrow.

The Glen

O Rest, thou pearl of wages,
  To thee all slowly drift;
Maybe a tempest rages
  Round about the gift.
    O Rest, thou pearl of wages.

How still the night—how pleasant
  The soft dark air to drink;
The brook makes rhyme incessant,
  No shadow cares to think.
    How still the night—how pleasant!

There is no need for thinking
  Where all is sweet and kind;
The little voice is sinking
  In souls that seek and find.
    There is no need for thinking.

Adieu, small singing arrow,
  Adieu, thou ripple lithe;
O, streamlet, dark and narrow,
  I prithee be more blithe.
    Adieu, small singing arrow!

Their Wayward Round

Gone is the shade—revolving,
  And circling through the gloam;
Now, now in air dissolving;—
  Come, shadows, let us home.
    Gone is the shade—revolving.

Come and slowly ripple
  By the bending fern;
Slowly, slowly dipple—
  There is no return.
    Come and slowly ripple.

O night, we do not fear thee;
  O day, we have no dread;
O storm, we do not hear thee
  In this calm cloistered bed.
    O night, we do not fear thee.

How dark the glen—it alters—
  Majestic shadows stand;
Come now, though singing falters,
  And greet the phantom band.
    How dark the glen—it alters!

The Glen

Hist!—hist! what sound is stealing—
  No more the trees are thin;
The forest hymn low pealing
  Now bids us enter in.
    Hist!—hist!—what sound is stealing?

See there—see there before us
  The exhalations rise
That soon will hover o'er us—
  An icy paradise.
    See there—see there, before us.

Flow on—flow on—low whisper—
  Salute the listening trees;
The air grows crisp and crisper;
  What strange delights are these?
    Flow on—flow on—low whisper.

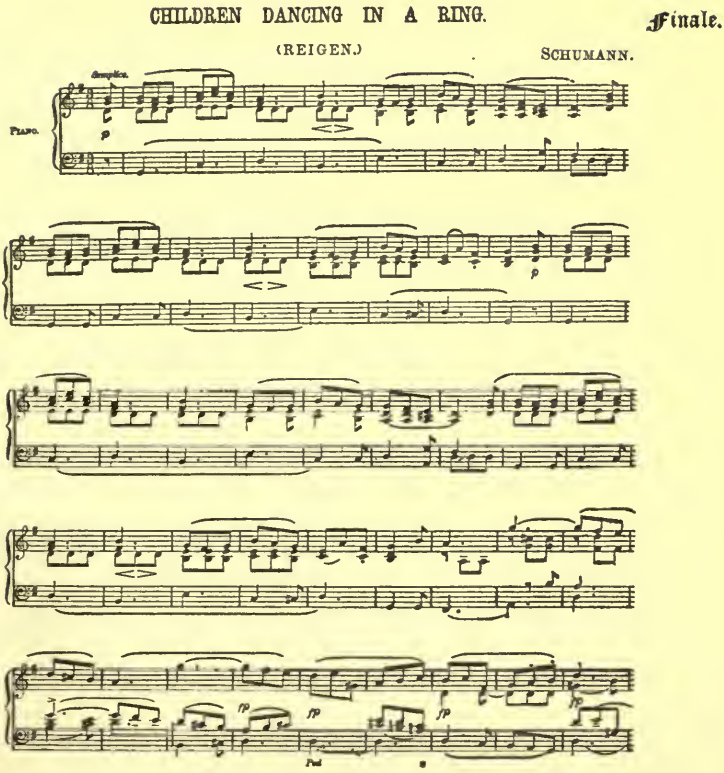
The frost is near—be silent all awhile,
And slumber for a space; I will beguile
  Ye with another song in spring;
  Just now there is a pause—o'er everything
Leans the Ice Maiden with her trancéd smile.

Their Wayward Round

Her misty breath upsoars for many a mile,
And bids the snow-clouds, gathering pile on pile,
"Fling hither, thither your white garlanding,
The frost is near."

Do they demur? O effort vain, futile;
Sleep is a lake love-charmed into an isle,
Where day is not—where birds on drowsy wing,
Lulled by the starlight, do forget to sing;
We to this change our souls will reconcile—
The frost is near!

Their Wayward Round



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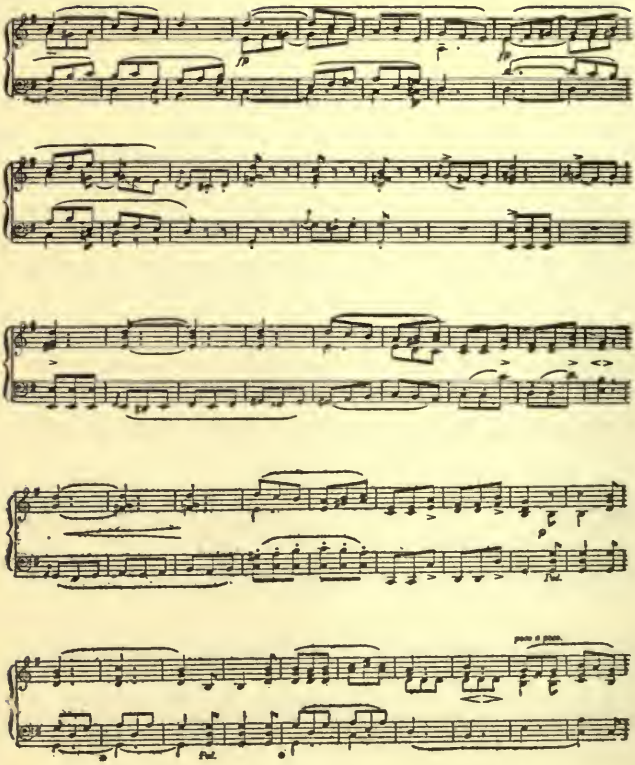

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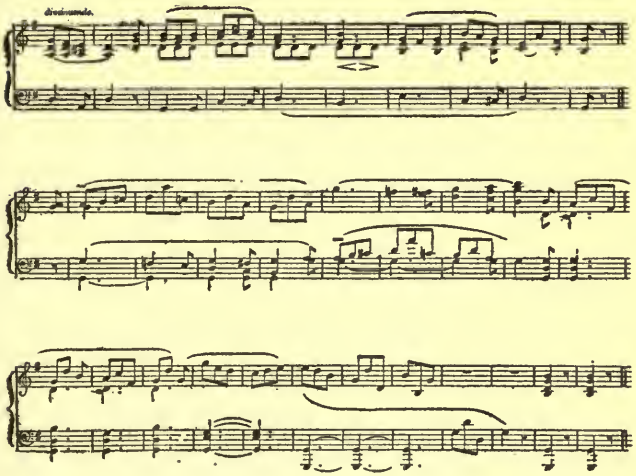

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